The New Bloomfield, Pa. Times.

VOL. XI. NEW BLOOMFIELD, PA., TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1877. NO. 46.

THE TIMES.

An Independent Family Newspaper,

IS PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY BY

F. MORTIMER & CO.

—o—

Subscription Price.

Within the County, ... $1 25
" " " Six months,..... 75
Out of the County, including postage, 1 50
" " " six months " 85

Invariably in Advance!

☞ Advertising rates furnished upon application.

LOVE IN A HOGSHEAD.

"SO MISS VASCOUR has a lover," said Fred. "Where did she find him?"

"In a hogshead," I replied, soberly.

"What?"

"In a hogshead."

"I asked you where Miss Vascour found her lover."

"And I repeat that she found him in a hogshead."

"What do you mean, you absurd woman?" he said.

The compliment did not move me. It was not a novelty.

"Just what I say."

"Then there must be a story to tell.—Just bring that cushion for my foot, and let's have it—that's a darling."

There's no harm in saying that Fred's coaxing is irresistible; for the dear fellow is my brother, and since he came home from the war, consecrated by the bloody baptism of Chickamuaga and Stone River, he had become doubly our hero, and the whole family had resolved itself into a committee of ways and means to promote his pleasure.

I was the self-constituted story-teller. Coming home every Saturday from Mrs. Forsyth's boarding house, I related the petty dramas that had been enacted under my eyes, giving what life and reality I could to the *dramatis personæ*, and only borrowing from imagination an occasional gleam or two of color. Fred said I was a perfect artist. He knew Helen De Ruyter, and Captain Ellingwood, and Miss Vascour, just as well as I did, and his surprise was quite natural when I told him that Miss Vascour—the dainty highbred creature—found her lover in a hogshead.

"Now for a romance!" And Fred established himself upon his cushions, and turned his white thin face towards me with an air of confident expectancy that it was a happiness to gratify. So I began a long seam, and my story at the same time:

I had been at Mrs. Forsyth's long enough to feel quite at home, when, one morning, I noticed a superfluous plate was upon the table, and an empty chair was evidently waiting for somebody.

"Is there a new-comer, Ms. Forsyth?" cried out Helen De Ruyter, in that clear impetuous voice of hers.

"Yes. A Miss Vascour."

"And who is Miss Vascour?"

"She is a day governess somewhere in the city," replied Mrs. Forsyth.

"O!"

Helen De Ruyter was an heiress and a belle, gave us the fashions, and communicated a stylish air to our establishment. That little interjection spoke volumes.

The four clerks on the other side of the table tittered feebly, and Dr. Morrison, Miss De Ruyter's special adorer, repeated in an oily tone:

"A day governess!"

The syllables had hardly died away on the air before the door opened and a lady came in.

"Miss Vascour?" pronounced our hostess.

I was aware of a flash of surprise passing over the faces at the table, and Mr. Deane, the lawyer, rose immediately, and set Miss Vascour's chair in its place. I caught a gleam of malice in Helen De Ruyter's wickedly beautiful gray eyes, and said to myself, "One enemy already?"

It was true. She never forgave Miss Vascour that little involuntary attention on the part of Mr. Dean. The two ladies were *vis-a-vis*. I tried to distract Miss Vascour's attention by various small diversions. I gave her the sugar and cream, and helped her to biscuit—all in the hope that she would not notice Miss De Ruyter's scornful ignoring of her presence.

I might have spared my strategy.—The calm, proud, sweet face gave no recognition of any impertinence. I doubt if she saw the stylish figure in the showy morning-wrapper that faced her. Mr. Deane was speaking to her, and I caught the sound of her voice, so soft and mellow, not pitched in that high shrill key so usual and so disagreeable, but musical and flowing, reminding one of summer birds and the sweet sounds of nature. Such a still, sweet face—the slow smiles lighting the limpid eyes before they dimpled the cheeks—so full of repose, but thrilling in its hint of latent power, dark and clear in its coloring, no brilliancy, except in the sweet lips that were crimson as the autumn leaf—heavy braids of black hair lying on the temples and outlining the low perfect forehead. A face out of a picture, such as looks at you from the canvas of the early masters, who painted saints and Madonnas—a face too beautiful for earth, but not happy enough for heaven, having a lingering sorrow that disturbed its perfect sweetness; an eagerness and repressed vehemence of nature, that flashed out now and then in waves of delicate color over the smooth skin, or shone, diamond bright, in the large beautiful eyes.

Miss Vascour went out and in among us reticent and proud, but gentle, and most grateful for any courtesy; a whole winter passed before any of us knew her. One day—it was the last of February—I came home early, and going up stairs, saw that Miss Vascour's door was ajar.

"Won't you come in?" She looked out, a morning brightness suffusing her face.

I went, of course. It was pleasant to be distinguished, and I knew that no one in the house, except the maid and landlady, had ever seen the inside of Miss Vascour's room.

"You look happy," I said.

"I am, I have had news from home that makes me glad."

I looked about me. The room was like her—quiet, harmonious, with just a gleam of splendor. There was no clutter of *bijouterie*, none of the fashionable littering of mantel, and tables, and whatnots with small articles, which makes a modern parlor look like a toy-shop. There were a good many books, a landscape of Turner's, a lithograped Madonna, and one or two plaster casts from some real statue. Then there was a single rose in the window, in luxuriant bloom, a pot of hyacinths, that saturated the room with their pungent sweetness, and a vine of English ivy about a window, framing it in verdure, making it look like an opening into green summer gardens, instead of the cold winter landscape which lay outside the walls.

Miss Vascour took up her work again. It was a little velvet sack, which I had noticed was beginning to look frayed about the edges and defaced along the seams, but under her enchanting fingers it was undergoing a transformation into a charming basque.

"Poor but proud, you see," she said, smiling, as I looked at her work.

"Then you are poor!" I said, absently.

She laughed gayly.

"Did you think that a day governess went out teaching for recreation?"

"But I should think the governess' salary would make you independent," I ventured to say.

"Ah! if you only knew what a deal of duty it does—what a vast extent of surface it is spread over."

I began to see how it was.

"And what was the pleasant news from home?" I asked.

A bright smile swept away the soberness which had come over her face.

"Sister Isabel is going to be married, and I shall be wanted at home for the wedding in June," she answered.

"How many are there besides Isabel?"

"Johnny, who is in college; Maud, a five-year-old baby and mother?"

It was a heedless question. Her eyes swam instantly.

"Father was a minister," she sobbed. "He died last winter—you did not guess it, because we were too poor for me to wear mourning."

I divined the rest of the orphan's story. I picked up the velvet basque which had fallen from her hand, and said, while I lightly brushed its soft nap:

"This must be an heirloom, I am sure. It would cost a fortune now-a-days."

"It was my mother's wedding cloak. Give it to me now. You nave made me cry, and hindered my work, and yet I am going to forgive you."

I drew a cricket near her, and looked up into her now smiling eyes.

"You don't cry often now," I said.—"You keep your tears in your heart, and that is what makes your face so pathetic sometimes."

'Little sorcerer! How do you know?'

"It would be much better to cry and have it over," I pursued.

"I can't," she answered. "It makes my headache and my eyes red, so I don't care to be seen, and wastes my time. I can't afford to cry. But I asked you in here to sing to me."

"Did you? I'll sing to you every day if you let me come in," I said, eagerly.

"Will you? It is a compact then—now sing."

I did sing. I searched among the dear homely ballads that I knew for songs to please her; I sung gay carols and sunny glees; I hummed sweet opera airs—I tried to recall to her those exquisite songs without words, in which I delighted, and at last, I gave her sweet hymns and stately anthems, and tender touching prayers that had flowed out from some pure soul in music. And she listened, her hands crossed in her lap, and her face like one rapt in holy dreams. I stopped, at last, for I saw her heart was full.

"Thank you—" drawing a long sigh.

I rose.

"Now I am going down stairs so you can finish your work. But will you come down an hour before dinner?"

"If I can, but I must finish this first. Don't you wish things were immortal?" she said, playfully.

"Not quite—for then I should have to wear my cloak that I hate so to the end of time. But if I had a store of velvets and silks, I don't know."

And so I left her. I met Helen De Ruyter on the stairs, just come out in a new toilet—a maze of sheeny silks and misty lace.

"Where have you been?" she asked.

"In Miss Vascour's room."

She curled her lip.

"What kind of a place is it?"

"One that suits her," I said, quietly.

Two hours after the parlor door opened and Miss Vascour appeared in the velvet basque.

"O, come in," I cried. "Miss De Ruyter has gone out with one of her beaux, and we shall be very cosy."

She smoothed down her sleeves, caressingly.

"How do you like it? All the shabbiness hidden, is it not, and good for another four years, at least?"

"Charming," I said, making the graceful figure revolve for my pleasure.—"Now sit down, and tell me more about Isabel. We can have such a nice talk alone."

Alas to the fallacy of human expectations! The bell rang, there was a rustle of silks in the hall, and I fled. It was the mother and aunt of the day governess' pupils, called to patronize the young lady. I forgot my chagrin in a book, heard the bell ring again, dreamily, and at last finished by book, and went down stairs fifteen minutes before dinner. There were voices in the parlor, as I paused on the threshhold—not Dr. Morrison's oily tones, nor yet Mr. Deane's clear incisive emphasis.

Mrs. Forsyth came through the hall.

"Who is here, Mrs. Forsyth?"

"Only Captain Ellingwood!"

The landlady was radiant.

"O, haven't I heard of him before?"

"I dare say—he is Miss De Ruyter's special ambition."

"Ah! I remember. Captain Ellingwood, when he was not at sea in the Arabia, honored Mrs. Forsyth's house with his presence. A fastidious, unimpressionable man, I was told, true as steel and as gold, a hero of the nineteenth century—and a bachelor. Miss De Ruyter had aimed her graces in vain. Captain Ellingwood had known her three years, and was still a bachelor.—What wonder that Miss De Ruyter was indignant. I opened the door, curious to see this impersonation of modern chivalry. Miss Vascour was sitting there, and presented me, in her graceful way. A stately man, dignified and noble, with power in every feature of the handsome face. I stole a look at Miss Vascour. There was a red flush upon the white cheek, and a new gleam in the still dark eye. Then I guessed that they had been a tete-a-tete for a whole hour. Not to be *de trop*, I took a magazine, and retired to a corner, and I must confess that the conversation went on nicely without me. Presently Miss De Ruyter burst into the room, in a pretty flutter of excitment.

"Why, Captain Ellingwood, you have fairly stolen a march upon us," exclaimed the beauty. "We did not expect the Arabia till the tenth, and here you are while it is yet February!"

"You flatter me, Miss De Ruyter. I never could have supposed that my coming would be anticipated. The Arabia is due on the twenty-sixth, so that I am really behind my time."

"Was it the twenty-sixth?" said Miss De Ruyter, knitting her pretty eyebrows. "Well, I am good for nothing at remembering figures." And the lady pushed an ottoman towards him, and sat down so as to interpose her tall person between him and Miss Vascour.

I watched the slow color creeping into Miss Vascour's face, and the flash of anger in Captain Ellingwood's keen eyes. He wheeled an arm-chair forward.

"Allow me to offer you this, Miss De Ruyter."

She crimsoned, bit her lip, and then after a moment's delay spread her flowing drapery in the chair he had set for her. Mr. Deane came in just here, and finding an empty seat near Miss Vascour, appropriated it. I watched the little scene—saw Miss De Ruyter's futile effort to engross them both—saw Captain Ellingwood's eyes stray away from her brilliant complexion and showy person, to rest upon Miss Vascour's pure, still face.

Presently going out to dinner somebody pinched me.

"Helen De Ruyter, I'll prosecute you for an assault.,'

"Pshaw! that didn't hurt you, I I wanted you to look around," she said, in an energetic whisper.

"Why?"

"Why?" impatiently. "Don't you see that she is setting her cap for Capt. Ellingwood?"

"Who?"

"Miss Vascour, of course." And the beauty's face darkened.

"I looked at them.

"He does seem to be very much interested in her, certainly," I said, maliciously.

"You are very absurd," she returned, angrily. "Do you think he would marry a mere adventuress as she is?"

"There you are mistaken, Miss De Ruyter. Miss Vascour is a Brahmin of the Brahmins," I said, coolly. "The family are as proud as—"

"They are poor," interrupted Miss De Ruyter. "But Captain Ellingwood intends to remain a bachelor. You had better tell her so, since she seems to be a protege of yours."

"Excuse me, but had you not better tell her yourself? You have known him long—no one would be more likely to have ascertained his intentions in regard to marriage than Miss De Ruyter."

She gave me a black look, and we parted at the table.

A month drifted away, and April was close by. All this time our drama was approaching a denouement. Miss Vascour was lovely and ladylike, and Helen De Ruyter was torn with jealousy. She had surely lost Mr. Deane, who worshipped the very folds of Miss Vascour's dress—adored her afar off, with a silent worship, which might or might not find expression, according as circumstances wrought, for he was a man of the world, acute, able and self-conscious, not a man to venture much, by no means a man to risk a deliberate offer unless he had good reason for thinking he should be accepted. So it was just possible that after loving Miss Vascour, he might marry Helen De Ruyter.

But Captain Ellingwood was of another stamp—not to be easily thwarted, to let anything come between him and Miss Vascour, if he loved her. But did he love her? I was as curious about it as Helen De Ruyter.

He came into the parlor one afternoon, when I was sitting alone, gave a quick glance around the room and sat down with a disappointed air. My wicked genius prompted me to tease him for a scent.

"She isn't here, you perceive," I said, quietly.

"Who isn't here?" he returned coloring a little.

"Miss Vascour. You were looking for her, weren't you?"

"How do you know?" he demanded, half smiling. "Are you a clairvoyant?"

"One doesn't need to be a clairvoyant to see some things," I answered, audaciously.

He bent his keen eyes upon me.

What things, for instance?"

I made the plunge. Advance was as safe as retreat.

"And then one cannot help hearing what the world says," I continued.

"Mrs. Forsyth's world, I suppose. Well, what does the world say?"

He was unwinding my worsteds with some embarrassment, but looking rather pleased and curious.

"The world says that Captain Ellingwood, the unvanquished hero of a hundred sieges, the fastidious, the incorrigible, is in love with Miss Vascour."

He reddened a little.

"That is what the world says."

"And what do you say?" he asked.

"I say the world is very stupid and foolish, as it always is—that with Capt. Ellingwood, admiring and liking are a long way from loving, and that while his intellect appreciates and his taste approves Miss Vascour, his heart is entirely untouched—is, indeed, in that callous and half-petrified state which might be expected in a heart that had resisted so many attacks."

In an instant, I saw by the conscious look which overswept his face that I had stated the case correctly.

'And suppose I admit this hypothesis,' he said, smiling, "whose fault would it be, if fault there is?"

"Nobody's except Captain Ellingwood. Not Miss Vascour's, certainly."

"If I were a man, I would fall in love with her."

"Would you? But then you might not find it easy to fall in love."

"I would be a man, and not a fossil," I cried, indignantly.

He laughed.

"My dear little woman, why do you care?"

"Because she is such a true, sweet woman," I said, vehemently. "I hate to see her wasting her life in thankless work, working for other people and not for her own."

"Such work brings its reward," he said, quietly; "and yet it is sad. But there is Deane, he is rich and will marry her by-and-by."

I gave him a sharp look. Nothing but simple friendliness in his face.

"I don't know that it would please me. Can he love her enough? O, she needs—she ought to have so much."

He looked surprised at my enthusiasm.

"A man would be a villain to marry Miss Vascour without loving her. She is very graceful and lovely—very good, too, as I believe," he replied with quiet gravity.

"Good! Capt. Ellingwood, I see that she does not show herself to you as she does to me."

"Doesn't she? Then it is hardly fair to call me a fossil because I don't look at her through your eyes."

"Forgive me, Captain Ellingwood. I was vexed because you wouldn't praise her."

"I will praise her as much as you like. Do you ever think of her as a dove, when you see her? Something in the grace of her movements, in the soft delicate colors she always wears, but more I think in the exquisite precision of everything about her, her dainty niceness of apparel, in the charming smoothness of her plumage—if I may so speak—remind me of the doves."

"O Captain Ellingwood, if you are ever really in love, may I be there to see," I said, laughingly.

"I bide my time. But how can you fancy Miss Vascour among any rough surroundings—at sea in a storm, for example, or out of doors in a high wind?"

"I saw her come in the other day—there was a perfect gale in the street—but her plumage, as you call it, was en-